

IN BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 1975

Present: Chairman John E. Taft, William F. Toomey and John C. Powers.

The statutory requirements as to notice having been fulfilled, a joint meeting between the Board of Selectmen and Highway Commission was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman John E. Taft.

Highway Commission

Present: Chairman John C. Hare, Anthony L. Galeota, Jr., Frederick W. Welch, Ronald J. Griffin, and Martha J. Coe of the Highway Commission.

Chairman Taft informed the Highway Commission they had been mailed and received the Haskins and Sells Highway audit reports dated July 8 and July 15, 1974, only five days after the Selectmen had received the same, for the first time. At this point, Mr. Taft gave a brief summary of the past events and circumstances leading to the completion of the Haskins & Sells audit report, and stated that it was reviewed only by the Executive Secretary, and immediately turned over to the Attorney General's office. Mr. Taft stated the Haskins & Sells audit reports were released to the Selectmen and Highway Commission after approval of the Attorney General's office on May 29, 1975.

Mr. Taft further stated the purpose of the meeting tonight was to discuss the procedures whereby the audit reports would be released to the public after the Blaine trials had been concluded.

After discussion, it was agreed by those present that another joint meeting should be scheduled immediately after the conclusion of the Blaine trial to discuss in detail the contents of the Highway audit reports with a representative from Haskins and Sells.

Selectman Powers stated that one part of the audit report dealt with recommendations on over-all revisions to financial or bookkeeping procedures of the Highway Department. Mr. Powers added that the main question of tonight's meeting was to determine the most constructive way of releasing the audit reports to the public.

Mr. Hare indicated the Highway Commission had several questions on the contents of the audit reports, such as the substantiation or documentation on the misuse of Ch. 90 Highway Funds, and expressed hope that a representative of Haskins & Sells would attend the next joint meeting and respond to such questions.

After discussion on the scope of work Haskins & Sells agreed to perform prior to the actual audit, the Exec. Sec. was directed to furnish the present Highway Commission members with a copy of Haskins & Sells' proposal dated June 14, 1974, outlining certain procedures they intended to apply during the audit of Highway records.

Mr. Galeota stated that after Haskins & Sells completed their audit the Highway Commission did attempt to implement recommendations, such as verification of cash receipts, to improve the internal accounting system. Mr. Galeota further stated that the Highway Commission, over the past two years, had had a good internal system of control and reporting on encumbrances of all Highway funds. Mr. Galeota agreed to start

implementing certain recommendations of Haskins & Sells, but indicated he had documentation that would refute certain sections of their audit findings.

Mr. Hare stated there was no excuse for prior Highway mistakes, and we should proceed to implement accepted sections of the Haskins & Sells reports. Mr. Hare added that a majority of the present Highway Commission were not members during the main period covered by the audit reports.

At the conclusion of the meeting, there was consensus or agreement on the following matters:

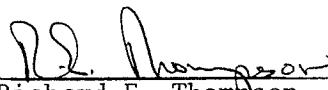
1. At the conclusion of the Blaine trial a joint meeting should be scheduled again prior to a press conference releasing the Haskins & Sells audit reports.
2. Any public, written statement to be released relative to the Haskins & Sells audit reports should have the joint approval of the chairmen of the Board of Selectmen and Highway Commission.
3. A memorandum regarding the public bidding law should be prepared by the Town Accountant and Town Counsel and sent to all departments, boards, and commissions. It was suggested to include in such a memorandum an explanation on the laws relating to hiring of professional services not requiring public bidding.
4. A townwide periodic independent audit should be instituted in the future.

On the subject of collective bargaining, the Selectmen brought the Highway Commission up to date on the status of 1975-76 negotiations.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was on motion unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Attest:

  
Richard E. Thompson  
Executive Secretary/Clerk